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Pell Urges Improving Relations With Cuba

After Meeting With Castro, Senator Asks Small Steps Aimed at Eventual Normalization

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By Don Oberdorfer
Washington Post Staff Writer

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), who met last weekend in Havana with Cuban President Fidel Castro, said yesterday that both sides should take small steps aimed at eventual normalization of U.S.-Cuban relations.

In a Capitol Hill news conference, Pell said, "The policies of both governments toward each other have become sterile" after nearly 30 years of intense hostility. "It is time to break the logjam. . . . I believe we should make an effort to begin at least talking to each other about the many issues on the U.S.-Cuba agenda."

Pell, who has visited Cuba at 14-year intervals in 1960, 1974 and last weekend, spent about three hours with Castro late Friday night and early Saturday and also saw political prisoners, religious leaders and lesser Cuban officials.

Pell said Cuban officials "expressed sincere interest" in sugges-

tions that small steps should be taken by each side now, leading to "progressively more difficult but mutually beneficial steps" later.

The Foreign Relations Committee chairman proposed that Castro begin by releasing the four remaining *plantados*, long-term political prisoners taken in the early years of the Cuban revolution nearly three decades ago. Pell met the four at their prison Friday.

Pell suggested that the United States might facilitate telephone calls to and from Cuba and be more forthcoming with visas to Cubans to visit here. He said he was considering legislation to end the U.S. embargo on Cuban purchases of medicines and medical supplies here.

Cooperation between the U.S. and Cuban coast guards against narcotics trafficking is another small step that might be taken, Pell said.

Pell, who returned to Washington from Havana Monday night, met Tuesday with Secretary of State-designate James A. Baker III but

did not bring up his impressions and recommendations from his Cuban trip.

President-elect George Bush took an unyielding posture toward Cuba during his campaign for the White House. Meeting Cuban-American leaders on June 13, Bush declared, "There have been no accommodations made with Castro's corrupt, communist government and there will be no accommodations made with that government as long as Ronald Reagan is in the White House—and . . . if I am elected, I can guarantee you" that there won't be.

Reagan, meanwhile, met at the White House yesterday with Ricardo Bofill, founder and former head of the Cuban Human Rights Committee, who was previously jailed as a political prisoner. White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the meeting "underscores the president's continued support for human rights in Cuba and for the Cuban Human Rights Committee."

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev will fly to Havana on Friday morning next week following a

three-day visit to the United Nations and New York, where he will meet Reagan and Bush at a Wednesday luncheon. Pell said he is "a little puzzled" about the purposes of Gorbachev's journey to Havana but noted that Cuba "seems to be lagging behind" in the kind of reform programs Gorbachev has sponsored within the Soviet Union.

State Department experts said Gorbachev's Havana trip might be intended in part to demonstrate his independence from Washington in Western hemispheric affairs and to convey appreciation to Castro for his recently expressed willingness to withdraw an estimated 50,000 Cuban troops from Angola as part of a southern Africa diplomatic settlement encouraged by the Soviet Union.

The experts also said Gorbachev is reported to be unhappy with the high costs of subsidizing his Cuban ally. Deputy CIA Director Robert M. Gates recently said the Soviets are providing \$7 billion yearly in military and economic aid to Cuba.

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30 November 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration
Deputy Director for Intelligence
Deputy Director for Operations
Deputy Director for Science and Technology
Inspector General

FROM: Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Committee Agenda for the First Quarter of 1989

1. I have scheduled three Executive Committee (EXCOM) meetings to address several pending personnel issues in the first quarter of the new year, as follows:

<u>Time/Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Action Officer</u>
1000, 12 January	Flexible Benefits	Roy Elmendorf
1000, 15 February	Dual-track Career Program	Roy Elmendorf
1000, 24 March	Position Classification Decentralization	Roy Elmendorf

2. The Director of Personnel should ensure interdirectorate participation in developing his proposals to the EXCOM on the above issues through the Personnel Management Advisory Board and should have specific proposals or options ready for the EXCOM to consider.

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cc: GC
Comptroller
D/OCA
D/OP